

Message Text

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11/21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 SAB-01 SAM-01 SSM-03 /080 W

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R 191540Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3675

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PORT SAID

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 6893

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (DUE LACK OF PARAS 1 AND 2)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGSNEFLINT, EG

OJECECT: LEFT-RIGHT "COALITION"

REF: (A) CAIRO 4727, (B) CAIRO 6685

SUMMARY. SENIOR GOE OFFICIAL HOLDING HIGH POST IN RELIGIOUS BUREACURACY TELLS US RELIGIOUS RIGHT IS RESPONDING POSITIVELY TO OVERTURES FROM LEFT TO ESTABLISH TACTICAL ALLIANCE. HE SAID MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO RE-EMERGE AS DISCRETE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND UNDERLINED HIS DETERMINATION EXPAND RELIGIOUS PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS DESIGNED TO CAUTION THEM AGAINST DANGERS OF BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT ESTREMISM. END SUMMARY.

1. RECENTLY THERE HAVE BEEN INDICATIONS, BOTH IN SPEECHES BY
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PROMINENT FIGURES SUCH AS SAYYID MAR'I, AND ALSO IN PRESS, THAT THE LEFT HAS BEEN ENDEAVORING FORGE ALLIANCE WITH RELIGIOUS RIGHT (REFS A AND B). WITH AN AZHAR CONNECTION, LEFTISTS HOPE TO SHED IMAGE OF ATHEISTIC COMMUNISM AND ACQUIRE BETTER CHANCE TO RALLY CONSERVATIV

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MASSES TO OPPOSITION BANNER. THUS, FOR EXAMPLE, MAY ISSUE OF LEFTIST MONTHLY AL-TALI'A PROVIDES SCHOLARLY EXPLANATION OF WHY ISLAMIC LAW MUST BE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT SOURCE FOR MODERN LEGISLATION.

2. WHAT HAS NOT BEEN CLEAR IS HOW RELIGIOUS RIGHT HAS BEEN RESPONDING TO MARXISTS' OVERTURES. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF MAY 19, HIGHER ISLAMIC COUNCIL DIRECTOR UWAYDA, WHO IS IN POSITION TO KNOW, SAYS AZHAR LEADERSHIP IS PLAYING BALL WITH THE LEFT. SHAIKH AL-AZHAR, IN UWAYDA'S OPINION, IS SUFI "FANATIC" AND IS DETERMINED MAKE MAJOR PUSH PASS "ISLAMIC"LEGISLATION BEFORE PRESENT PEOPLES ASSEMBLY TERM EXPIRES THIS SUMMER. AZHAR HAS CHOSEN TME WELL SINCE, AS OTHER LIBERAL EGYPTIANS HAVE TOLD US, NO DEPUTY WILL STAND BEFORE HIS CONSTITUENCY DURING CAMPAGIN AND ADVOCATE ANY MODERN PRACTICE (SUCH AS DRINKING ALCOHOL) WHICH COULD BE CONSTRUED AS ANTI-ISLAMIC. GOE IS, HOWEVER, QUIETLY OPPOSING THIS NEW LEGISLATION, AND RIGHT WANTS ALL SUPPORT IT CAN GET. UWAYDA WHISPERED "SECRET" THAT SHAIKH AL-AZHAR HAS BECOME ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN: HE DENOUNCES COMMUNISTS TO GOE WHILE ACCEPTING THEIR POLITICAL SUPPORT.

3. ASKED WHETHER THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD (IKHWAN) WILL BE PERMITTED TO BEGIN ISSUING ITS BANNED PUBLICATION AL-DA'WA AND WHETHER GOE WILL PERMIT BROTHERHOOD TO APPOINT A SUPREME GUIDE, UWAYDA SAID HE WAS QUITE SURE THAT PRESIDENT SADAT WILL NOT ALLOW IKHWAN TO EMERGE AGAIN AS DISCRETE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. HE BELIEVES, NEVERTHELESS, THAT THE IKHWAN AND THOSE OTHERS ON EXTREME RIGHT, BECAUSE OF NEW TACTICAL MARXIST-RIGHTIST HONEYMOON, REPRESENT POTENTIALLY "VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEM. PROBLEM CAN, HOWEVER, BE DEALT WITH BY WARNING YOUNG EGYPTIANS OF DANGERS OF EXTREMISM, AND THIS UWAYDA CONTINUES TO CONSIDER HIS FIRST PRIORITY DUTY. HE HINTED, HOWEVER, THAT PRESIDENT SADAT DOES NOT UNDERSTAND OR HAS AT LEAST NOT FOCUSED ON NEW POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE, WHICH AZHAR'S ALLEGED RESPONSE TO THE LEFT HAS CREATED. IN SHORT RUN, HOWEVER, UWAYDA SAID HE IS CERTAIN THAT PRESIDENT'S BROADLY-CONFIDENTIAL

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BASED POPULARITY, TOGETHER WITH MASS DISLIKE OF MARXISTS, WILL GUARANTEE THAT EXTEMISTS WILL NOT MAKE MAJOR IMPACT ON MASS OPINION. HE ALSO ELLEGED THAT IKHWAN ARE NOT AUTOMATICALLY POPULAR WITH EGYPTIAN PUBLIC OPINION, ALTHOUGH, OF COURSE, RELIGION IN ITSELF IS CRUCIAL FACTOR IN EGYPTIAN LIFE AND POLITICS.

4. IN LINE WITH HIS BELIEF THAT STUDENTS MUST BE FIRMLY LED TO SADAT'S MODERATE VIEWS OF RELIGION AND POLTICIS, UWAYDA SAYS HE HAS ENROLLED 10,000 EGYPTIAN STUDENTS IN THE HIGHER ISLAMIC COUNCIL PROGRAMS AND IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH CENTERS FOR EGYPTIAN STUDENTS IN EUROPE. HE SAID PARIS, AS MIGHT BE PREDICTED, CONTINUES TO PLAY ITS TRADITIONAL ROLE AS HOTBED OF ARAB MARXIST

ACTIVITY AND THAT EGYPTIAN MARXIST COMMITTEE, HEADED BY EGYPTIAN NASSERIST EXILE AMIN SHAKIR, APPROACHES EVERY NEW STUDENT IN FRANCE WITH THE INTENTION OF CONVERTING HIM OR HER TO COMMUNIST VIEWS. HE SAID IRAQI EMBASSY IN LONDON HAS BEEN OFFERING ON ITS LETTERHEAD ALL-EXPENSE-PAID UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN BAGHDAD TO EGYPTIAN STUDENTS IN FRANCE, ENGLAND, SPAIN, ITALY, AND SCANDINAVIA.

UWAYDA CLAIMED SYRIANS, TOO, ARE APPROACHING EGYPTIAN STUDENTS, AS ARE SOVIETS.

5. COMMENT: WE TEND TO TAKE UWAYDA'S ASPERSIONS ON SHAIKH AL-AZHAR WITH A GRAIN OF SALT SINCE THEY ARE BUREAUCRATIC RIVALS AND UWAYDA LIKES TO THINK OF HIMSELF AS SADAT'S CHIEF ADVISOR ON RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS. WE DO BELIEVE THAT HE IS RIGHT ON TACTICAL ALLIANCE BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT, ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT CLEAR ON WHY POWERFUL RIGHTIST SHAIKHS ARE PREPARED TO ENTERTAIN NOTION OF ALLIANCE WITH MARXISTS. SOME COOPERATION IS, HOWEVER, UNDOUBTEDLY OCCURRING AND COULD CONCEIVABLY SPILL OVER INTO ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

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